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**August 6, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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DEFENDANTS INDICTED IN WIRE FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT CASE

Baltimore, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced the indictment last week of the following 11 defendants charged with numerous counts of wire fraud, identity theft and one count of mail fraud arising from an alleged complex fraud scheme which used fraudulent business leases to seek financing for high-end automobiles and business-related equipment:

Ernest Robert Reinhardt, age 32, of San Juan Capistrano, California
Roderick Jerrod Major, age 33, of Irvine, California
Byron Keith Allen, age 33, of Irvine, California
Brian Dwayne Colston, age 33, of Baltimore, Maryland
Eric Seymore LeCount, age 35, of Baltimore, Maryland
Shannon Van Cleef Starke, age 31, of Baltimore, Maryland
Dana Eugene Johnson, age 29, of Baltimore, Maryland
Kevin Morris Foreman, age 34, of Baltimore, Maryland
Kirk Leroy Mitchell, age 35, of Baltimore, Maryland
Charles Loren Kemper, Jr., age 43, of Baltimore, Maryland
William Duke Thompson, age 35 of Baltimore, Maryland

The indictment alleges that as part of the scheme, the defendants used fake companies to apply for financing for their alleged business leases and unlawfully used the identities of numerous individuals by representing them to be officers of the fake companies. The fraudulent leases were used to obtain money and property at little or no cost to the defendants. For example, the defendants

obtained a number of high-end automobiles through financing for these fake leases and then defaulted on the loan payments. Some of the fraudulent leases sought financing for computers; however, no computers were delivered by the purported vendor, who is also alleged to be part of the fraud scheme and who pocketed some of the proceeds of the financing along with the other defendants.

Among the means alleged to be used by the defendants to facilitate their fraud are: the acquisition of shell corporations whose corporate histories could be used to legitimize the fake businesses in whose names the lease applications were filed; filing and creating fraudulent documents such as corporate resolutions, financial statements, tax returns and accounting firm opinion letters, all of which falsely represented the financial condition of the businesses making the applications; and forging the signatures of numerous individuals whose identities were misappropriated.

The fraud scheme as set forth in the indictment also alleges the wire transfer of approximately \$500,000 in unlawful proceeds obtained through the financing that resulted from the fraudulent lease applications.

The fraud counts carry a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and up to 3 years of supervised release. The identity theft counts carry a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and up to 3 years of supervised release.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Postal Inspection Service. The case is being prosecuted Assistant United States Attorney Christine Manuelian.